THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRIAL POLICY AND PROMOTION, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI ASHWANI KUMAR): (a) No, Sir. As per the extant policy, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) is not permitted in retail trade except in single brand product retailing.

(b) Does not arise.

FDI in North Eastern region

626. SHRI O.T. LEPCHA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) what is the Foreign Direct Investment in Industry Sector in the country;

(b) what are the reasons for low FDI in North Eastern Region particularly in Sikkim; and

(c) the necessary steps taken by Government to attract more investment in NER?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRIAL POLICY AND PROMOTION, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI ASHWANI KUMAR): (a) As per extant policy, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) up to 100% is allowed under the automatic route in the manufacturing sector subject to the sectoral guidelines. FDI inflows in the manufacturing sector during April, 2000 to December, 2007 were US $ 19,038 million and during the same period inflows in the manufacturing sector in the North Eastern Region were US $ 1.44 million.

(b) and (c) Government has put in place a liberal, transparent and investor-friendly policy for FDI. Under the liberalised economic environment, investment decisions, including choice of location, are taken by the entrepreneurs based on techno-economic and commercial considerations. Government has announced the 'North East Industrial and Investment Promotion Policy (NEIIPP), 2007' with effect from 1.4.2007, under which a package of fiscal incentives and other concessions has been notified for the North East Region.

Export of rice

†627. DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI:
SHRI RAJ MOHINDER SINGH MAJITHA:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the export of rice was banned in October, 2007 in view of the crisis of food supply in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is also a fact that this ban has been lifted; and

(d) if so, when this ban was lifted and the quantum of rice exported during the first nine months upto December in the year 2007?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) and (b) The export of non-basmati rice was banned in October, 2007 with a view to ensure procurement towards building of buffer stocks for the Public Distribution System.

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.